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# NPS Leadership Welcome This Summer's STEM Interns to Campus

MC1 Lewis Hunsaker | June 26, 2017



*The 2017 summer cohort of STEM interns are welcomed to campus by NPS senior leadership, seated right, Provost Dr. Steven R. Lerman, President retired Vice Adm. Ronald A. Route, and Acting Chief of Staff U.S. Marine Corps Col. Todd W. Lyons, from left to right. NPS STEM Internship Coordinator Alison Kerr, seated left, coordinates the annual summer experience for more than 80 high school and college undergrads from throughout the U.S.*

This summer's cohort of 78 science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) interns were welcomed to campus by NPS senior leadership, President retired Vice Adm. Ronald A. Route, Provost Dr. Steven R. Lerman, and Acting Chief of Staff U.S. Marine Corps Col. Todd W.

Lyons, June 22. The introduction provided an opportunity for NPS officials to share some of their own experiences, while also getting to know the interns on campus and the research efforts that await them.

“For you, this is a great opportunity to see what is possible,” said Route. “You will get the chance to work alongside some real professionals.”

During the meeting, NPS administrators talked about their varied career paths in the military and civilian sectors, leading them to their current roles at the university. They emphasized the importance of building personal and professional networks, maintaining a priority on service, and facing challenges head on.

“Growing up, I was always interested in science. I remember building my own telescope in high school ... and have always been curious about how things work,” said Lerman. “I encourage students to find the thing that excites their own interests. For me it was higher education ... I love teaching, I love students, I love the whole enterprise of a university.”

Lyons reiterated the importance of teaching, and how it wasn't until a strong teacher connected his passions with the coursework that he found interest in science.

“I'm completely biased ... I love the Marine Corps and NPS, and think you have an enormous opportunity here,” Lyons noted. “In college, I avoided science, because I thought it wasn't for me. But in my last year of college, I took physics and I loved it because the professor that was teaching it married it with concepts in the military.”

Intern Richard Mattish, on campus through the Naval Research Enterprise Internship Program (NREIP), has been working with his faculty mentor since mid-May.

“I have learned that I have a lot to learn when it comes to research, and why some of my experiments are not working,” said Mattish. “I have found it very valuable to see how my mentor addresses problems with solutions, some that I never would have thought of.”

NPS' STEM internship program partners with the Office of Naval Research to bring high school and college students onto campus for 6-10 weeks over the summer through NREIP and the Science and Engineering Apprenticeship Program (SEAP). In addition, the university hosts Midshipmen from the U.S. Naval Academy as well as cadets from the U.S. Military and Air Force academies, and maintains active relationships with California State University Monterey Bay and regional high schools. NPS also has a long-standing partnership with nearby Hartnell Community College providing opportunities for students from the Salinas valley.

The interns are partnered with volunteer university faculty, and are assigned projects that focus on areas of national security, such as computer science, space systems, renewable energy, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), and the modeling of virtual environments, among many others.

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